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Justice Ministry Designates Novaya Gazeta as 'Foreign Agent'

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Dmitry Muratov, former editor-in-chief of Novaya Gazeta. **Kena Betancur / AFP**

Russia's Justice Ministry on Friday designated the independent online news outlet Novaya Gazeta as a "foreign agent."

Authorities claimed Novaya Gazeta publicly opposed the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, spread "false information" about elections and collaborated with other "foreign agents."

Hundreds of cultural figures, journalists, businesspeople, as well as news outlets and organizations, have been branded "foreign agents" since Russia introduced the label in 2012.

Russia applies the designation to individuals it views as enemies of the state. Those branded as "foreign agents" are required to include a lengthy disclaimer in all of their public appearances and statements, including posts on social media.

Authorities also expanded the registry of persons "affiliated with foreign agents" by adding more than 100 individuals connected to Novaya Gazeta. The list reportedly includes Yabloko

party chairman Nikolai Rybakov.

Affiliated individuals are not subject to the same strict requirements, but are required to declare their status on all electoral campaign materials.

Related article: Moscow Police Detain Yabloko Candidates Running in State Duma Elections

Novaya Gazeta ceased print publication shortly after the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine due to censorship laws that the government passed as part of a broader crackdown on the press.

The newspaper has continued to publish articles and videos online.

Novaya Gazeta's former editor-in-chief, Dmitry Muratov, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression."

Also on Friday, Russia's Justice Ministry added writer Felix Sandalov, poet Sergei Leibgrad, scientist Tatiana Tatarinova and the academic journal Historical Expertise to its list of more than 1,250 "foreign agents."

All five entities and individuals were accused of systemically distributing materials produced by existing "foreign agents" or "undesirable" organizations and spreading "false information" about government policy.

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